



Visitor Engagement

Commitment 6: Businesses educate visitors about New Zealand's cultural and behavioural expectations

What does this mean?

- Increasing visitor numbers, and the increasing cultural diversity of these visitors, means that care need to be taken to ensure that New Zealand's host communities continue to support tourism.
- While New Zealanders appreciate the value of tourism and are supportive of the industry, it is important that we actively address those areas of concern to New Zealanders.
- Equally, the vast majority of visitors want to know how they can avoid behaving in ways that do not align with *'the way things are done in New Zealand'*.
- This Commitment emphasises the duty of the tourism industry to be active in informing visitors about Kiwi norms and culture, and setting out what visitors (domestic and international) can do to be 'good travellers' as they move around our country.

How does this benefit me?

- By introducing our visitors to Kiwi culture and how we expect them to behave as they interact with your business and more broadly as they travel around New Zealand, we will greatly enhance the enjoyment for both our visitors and our host communities.
- By doing this, you can contribute to increasing visitor satisfaction that is key to increasing tourism value.
- As the same time, you are investing in ensuring our host communities continue to support your business and the industry generally. As well as general information, this can include targeting those issues that host communities feel most strongly about, including freedom camping, driver safety, etc.
- In taking the time to talk to your customers, you can do so in interesting ways and you can also take the opportunity to tell them about your story. Make it a 'value-add' for your visitors.
- Overall, working to ensure the 'social licence to operate' of your business and our industry is one of the most important things that we can do, individually and collectively. Think of, and nurture, 'social licence' as a key business asset.

Actions for your business

- Inspire. Make it a part of your usual operating routines to encourage visitors to embrace our culture and behavioural expectations by explaining how we go about things and what our values are – it is not about setting rules or policing your visitors. Keep it light and uplifting.

- Work out the key messages you want to convey – specific to your business and any other wider messages you think will be useful for your visitors.
- What is common for us may be entirely new for others. For instance, behaviours that you or your host communities may perceive as unacceptable may be the result of not knowing the local customs and simply following one's own culture. In most cases, a friendly remark will be all that is needed to stop such behaviour.
- Don't be shy to intervene and educate when you see the need. Do so in a positive way by sharing how things are done the Kiwi way – this way your visitor will likely be grateful for your friendly advice.
- Be aware that visitors can confuse our friendliness as permission to behave as they please. This makes it important to explain that Kiwis are welcoming people, but that being considerate and respectful of our culture and country are attributes we expect from Kiwis and international visitors alike.
- Remember that the greater the cultural difference between your visitors and the New Zealand culture, the more important it becomes that you engage with your visitors to close that gap.
- Educate yourself and your staff about the cultural background of your visitors. Not only will this help you to serve them better, but it will also enable you to address cultural differences that are specific to particular visitor groups.

Become an inspiration for others!

We would love to share your contribution to creating a sustainable New Zealand tourism industry. Email us at info@tia.org.nz with your sustainability success stories and inspire others across the industry.

**Additional information, resources and useful links can be found on
www.sustainabletourism.nz**